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PRO-ISRAEL INTEREST GROUPS AND THE
FORMULATION OF US FOREIGN POLICY FOR
THE MIDDLE EAST

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5 February 1973

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PRO-ISRAEL INTEREST GROUPS AND THE FORMULATION
OF US FOREIGN POLICY FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

A MONOGRAPH

by

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ABSTRACT

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The importance of maintaining peace, stability, and United States prestige throughout the Middle East is acknowledged by most scholars and statesmen. Many of these authorities believe that US policy has been decidedly pro-Israel and that this bias has resulted in a deterioration in US influence in the area. Some attribute this pro-Israel bias to interest group influence. This paper considers the foreign policy process in the Federal Government and identified points of access into the process which may be used by interest groups; evaluates the potential of pro-Israel interest groups; and analyzes the methods used and effectiveness of pro-Israel interest groups in influencing US foreign policy. Conclusions are as follows: interest groups can influence foreign policy and their sources of strengths are electoral power, access to the governmental elites, and funds; pro-Israel interest groups possess the potential to influence foreign policy; and since World War II, pro-Israel interest groups have influenced Middle East policy.

PREFACE

This Monograph was written in conjunction with the Advanced Degree Program in Public Administration at Shippensburg State College. Specifically, the paper was presented to Mr. Richard Beckner for Political Science 527, Intergovernmental Relations. This topic was selected because it met the advanced degree course requirement and provided an opportunity to investigate one aspect of the factors influencing United States foreign policy for this one critical and emotional area.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Identifying and tracing the decision process employed by a government in the development of foreign policy is an interesting but frustrating endeavor. Volumes are published each year by government agencies which address foreign policy. The library is bulging with critiques of foreign policy, both its development and its implementation. Essays, theses, monographs and dissertations abound which analyze policy in relation to its effectiveness or ineffectiveness; its interaction with events as they developed in the past; its long-term effects on the United States; and the factors which influenced the development or implementation of specific policies. Special interest groups are considered by some to be a principal factor in the foreign policy process. The impact of interest group activity on domestic policy is recognized and generally understood. Interest group influence on foreign policy is neither as prevalent or as identifiable. Unfortunately, in both domestic and foreign policy, research in the field of interest group influence has failed to identify a precise set of rules for evaluating the influence of interest groups, or to isolate indicators of relative influences which have general acceptance.

This monograph will investigate the interrelationship of pro-Israel interest groups with principal government actors involved in the development of foreign policy in one critical but very emotional area--the Middle East.

BACKGROUND

The Middle East has historically been a volatile area of the world. Prior to World War II, English and French influence in the area was paramount, and the United States had only a limited role in the area. Following World War II and the emergence of the United States as the major Western power, United States concern for this area increased dramatically. Decolonization led to a corresponding reduction in British and French influence in the area. The importance of maintaining peace, stability and United States prestige throughout the Middle East is acknowledged by most scholars and responsible statesmen. President Nixon has indicated that he considers the Middle East to be the priority overseas problem area of the United States--even potentially more dangerous than Southeast Asia.¹

Accordingly, the formulation and execution of United States policy in this troublesome area is of major importance. In this relation, U.S. policy in the Middle East has been determined to be decidedly pro-Israel by many authorities. Some scholars and statesmen attribute this pro-Israel bias to dedicated, tightly organized, highly financed interest groups which exert excessive influence over policy makers, legislators and public opinion.

PROBLEM

The relationship of the executive and legislative branches of government and their basic responsibilities in the formulation and

¹Richard M. Nixon, U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's, Building for Peace: A Report to Congress, Department of State Bulletin, Desk 64 Part 1, Vol. LXIV, No. 1656 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 389.

execution of foreign policy are relatively clear and well documented. The response of each branch to external forces such as interest groups and public opinion is less clear. The latter is the primary aspect of the foreign policy equation which will be addressed in this paper. Specifically, the relationship of pro-Israel interest groups to the foreign policy process and the effect of these interest groups in different political environments will be investigated.

FRAME OF REFERENCE

The basic framework around which this problem is to be analyzed is the interrelationship of pro-Israel interest groups to the principal government actors in the foreign policy process. Historically, foreign policy development has been viewed as a secretive process in which only a few elite individuals within government have been included. In addressing the problem today, within the parameters of United States politics, one must accept the Executive Branch as having primary responsibility for foreign policy. However, Congress has direct means of influencing policy via the allocation of funds and its prerogative of approving treaties and appointments. Indirect means of influencing policy are achieved through recommendations and proposals to the Executive. The activity of interest groups will be evaluated in terms of: (1) influence in the executive branch of government; (2) influence with Congress; (3) the potential to influence elections; and (4) efforts directed toward shaping public opinion in order to generate pressure on the policy makers. The interrelationship between public opinion, interest groups, and electoral response to these two factors

will be difficult to measure but inferences can be derived. For clarity certain definitions are necessary.

Arab-Israeli Dispute

The dispute refers to the state of animosity which has existed between the state of Israel and surrounding Arab states since the termination of the British Mandate and the proclamation of Statehood by Israel in 1948.

Arab-Israeli Conflict/War

The term Arab-Israeli conflict or war will be identified to a specific period of hostilities; for example, 1956 war or the 1967 war.

Interest Group

An abundance of definitions for this term exist, with each having a different shade of meaning and each creating a slightly different population. For this paper an interest group is defined as,

. . . an organization, association or grouping of people who have as a group, identifiable goals or objectives, and which uses the collective power of the group to influence government policy through direct contact with government officials or indirect associations. It is located in the United States and composed primarily of United States citizens.²

Government agencies or activities are not considered to be interest groups; however, working in government does not preclude an individual from being a member of or working with an interest group.

Middle East

A general geographic area which includes the following countries: Israel, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran and Sudan.

²Graham Wootton, Interest-Groups (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 1-5.

Pro-Israel Interest Groups

This term will be used throughout the paper. It represents the total of organizations from the Jewish population which actively participate in programs to provide political and economic support for the Jewish state of Israel. Zionist organizations are included as pro-Israel organizations but they do not constitute the only pro-Israel organizations.

APPROACH

The foreign policy process in the federal government will be investigated to determine responsibilities and interactions within government. External influences on foreign policy will be identified, and the routes and points of access to executive and congressional personalities and activities that have major influence on this foreign policy process will be developed. From this survey, a model for evaluating interest group access to the foreign policy process will be devised. The potential of pro-Israel interest groups to influence foreign policy will be evaluated, based on their electoral strength, access, ability to influence a larger population, and ability to obtain and use funds to further their cause. To provide a mechanism for analyzing the methods used by pro-Israel interest groups to manipulate the foreign policy process and to assess their effectiveness, three major events will be investigated. These events are Israeli statehood, the 1956 Sinai campaign, and the 1967 Six Day War and its aftermath.

Chapter 2

THE FOREIGN POLICY PROCESS

(A Model for Analyzing Interest Group Access)

Before embarking on an effort to determine the influence of pro-Israel interest groups on foreign policy, responsibilities for foreign policy must be examined and external forces which influence the process must be identified. Points of access to the system which may be used by interest groups must be determined. Initially, the legal responsibilities for formulation and execution of foreign policy will be examined and the organizational framework within the executive and legislative branches of the federal government outlined. Power elements within the federal government will be discussed as they relate to foreign policy with specific attention given to the influence of the White House staff and the National Security Council in the Executive Branch and the committee system in Congress. Forces external to the federal government will be identified and their relationship to governmental actors in the foreign policy process examined.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOREIGN POLICY

By virtue of the Constitution, the Federal Government is the only agent of United States foreign policy. States are specifically precluded from dealing with other foreign powers. The President is the head and chief spokesman for the nation in foreign affairs.¹

¹W. Brooke Graves, American Intergovernmental Relations; Their Origins, Historical Development, and Current Status (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), pp. 360-361.

The Executive Branch and Foreign Affairs

Presidential powers in foreign affairs are very broad. He is responsible for establishing guidelines for the formulation of foreign policy and is the final decisionmaker in the implementation. With the consent of the Senate, he appoints cabinet officers, ambassadors, and key foreign service officers, and he has the power to negotiate treaties. The President selects his personal staff, special advisors and special agents without having to obtain congressional approval.² The presidential use of the Executive Agreement has been employed in foreign affairs frequently in the recent past. This type agreement does not require congressional approval, and as such, it has been viewed with concern by Congress.³

The Department of State is the executive department with the primary responsibility for foreign affairs. However, contemporary presidents have made extensive use of special assistants and special advisors for foreign affairs and national security. Other executive departments become involved in foreign policy when the policy effects their sphere of interest. This is generally acknowledged in the case of the Department of Defense, but it is also true in areas where domestic policies interact with foreign policy. A major actor in the foreign policy process is the National Security Council. The NSC was created by the National Defense Act of 1947. Since 1947, it has acquired and expanded its staff, and now it exercises considerable influence.

²Ibid.

³Francis O. Wilcox, Congress, The Executive and Foreign Policy, published for the Council on Foreign Relations (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 16.

In the foreign policy process, the power and influence within the Executive Branch vary with each administration. Each president has his own style and his own confidences, and the power structure is modified accordingly.⁴ The principal foreign policy actors in the Executive Branch are the President, State Department, Special Advisors to the President, and the National Security Council.

Congress and Foreign Policy

Congress has both a constitutional and statutory authority for legislative oversight and review of foreign policy.⁵ Specifically, the Senate has the authority to confirm selected presidential appointees and the constitutional authority to give advice and consent to treaties. As a result of this authority, the Senate has a constitutional advantage over the House in foreign affairs. The House, nevertheless, is the dominate influence in appropriations and as such has considerable control. Congressional participation in foreign policy evolves around two functions: its authority to recommend to the executive via a resolution; and its authority to legislate which is inherent in congressional prerogatives to approve appointments and treaties and to appropriate funds.⁶

Within Congress considerable power over foreign policy matters is vested in selected committees--the Senate Foreign Relations and Appropriations Committees, and the House Foreign Affairs and Appropriations Committees. These are the dominant committees, but when defense

⁴Ibid., pp. 61-65.

⁵Ibid., p. 81.

⁶James A. Robinson, Congress and Foreign Policy-Making (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, Rcv. Ed., 1967), pp. 10-15.

or domestic issues are at stake, other committees become involved. An excellent example of the degree of control exercised by committees over foreign policy is provided by James A. Robinson. His analysis shows a major disparity based on sponsorship in the percentage of foreign policy resolutions and bills which were reported to the Senate for action. Almost 55 percent of bills or resolutions sponsored by committee members were reported versus only 17 percent of those sponsored by nonmembers. Likewise, the power of the committee chairman is also demonstrated by this measure.⁷ Francis Wilcox indicates that party politics exerts much less influence over congressional participation in foreign policy than in domestic policies.⁸ However, the majority party in the committee does have impressive control over bills and resolutions reported to the Senate floor.⁹

Within committees the seniority system has a major affect on the composition and general philosophy of committees. Committees associated with foreign policy are recognized as prestige committees.¹⁰ The significance of prestige committees is that many legislators are vying for membership on these committees and the congressional leadership can select who will be members. This generally results in maintenance of the status quo. Secondly, the seniority system, although modified slightly in recent years, has resulted in the preponderance of committee chairmen being from the south.¹¹

⁷Ibid., pp. 76-78.

⁸Wilcox, pp. 16-17.

⁹Robinson, p. 79.

¹⁰Nelson W. Polsky, Congress and the Presidency, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), p. 60.

¹¹John D. Lees, The Committee System of the United States Congress (New York: Humanities Press, 1967), p. 33.

Congress has constitutional and statutory control over foreign policy. Exercise of this control is vested in both houses, the Senate having the dominate role in policy formulation, and the House in foreign aid and appropriations. The congressional committee exercises considerable power over congressional actions on foreign policy matters, and committee membership is the key to individual power in the process. Lastly, the seniority system and the prestige nature of committees involved with foreign affairs permit the existing congressional power structure to exercise control over the committees.

Congress and the Executive

The Executive has the dominant role in foreign policy. As U.S. involvement in world affairs expanded dramatically following World War II, Executive leadership took on a greater degree of responsibility for formulation and execution of policy. Today, the congressional role in foreign policy normally is to legislate presidential proposals with only minimal action by the Congress to initiate action. At the same time, neither branch of government is all powerful. The President can negotiate treaties, but he cannot compel the Senate to approve them; and he can ask Congress for funds to support a program, but Congress does not have to provide these funds. Congress can authorize funds for a program, but the President is not required to use them; and Congress can adopt resolutions proposing courses of action, but the President is not required to adopt the resolution.

In the federal government foreign policy matters are not addressed by any agency in a complete vacuum. In some situations, the security aspects of foreign affairs can inhibit interaction and

specifically limit congressional influence,¹² but interaction does occur. Dean Acheson estimated that he devoted one-sixth of each working day to formal and informal meetings with congressional committees. Dean Rusk, in his first five years as Secretary of State, appeared in 129 formal committee meetings and met informally with various members of Congress on 319 occasions.¹³ Contacts, coordination, and liaison between operating personnel in Congress, the White House, and the State Department are equally as extensive.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON FOREIGN POLICY

Both the legislature and the executive are elected officials and must be attuned to the desires of their constituents. Public opinion and interest group activity reflect to these elected officials some measure of constituent concern with policy. Many foreign policy issues become entwined with domestic policies, thus bringing state and local governments into the process. Lastly, any specific action in foreign affairs by the United States will be of concern to other sovereign nations and these nations will interact with the process. Accordingly, a brief analysis of access and influence by external forces is necessary.

Public Opinion

Public opinion is always a primary factor in actions and decisions of elected officials. However, political scientists tend to

¹²Wilcox, pp. 18-31.

¹³Ibid., pp. 66-67.

discount the influence of public opinion on foreign policy. Opinion polls have shown a shocking lack of information by the public in foreign policy matters and reflect general apathy. Doris Graber in an extensive study concludes that public opinion has very little influence on foreign policy. She also points out that when proposals are presented to government in sufficient detail to represent concrete policy suggestions, these proposals come from interest groups or policy or opinion elites.¹⁴ Examples do exist where public opinion has been instrumental in affecting executive and congressional actions on foreign policy. Cases in point are ratification of the United Nations Charter and appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican.¹⁵ It appears that public opinion is not as decisive in foreign affairs as it is in the case of domestic policy. Emotional issues, however, can generate sufficient public concern to influence key legislators and at times the President.

Interest Groups

Separating interest group influence from public opinion is necessary to evaluate the process, but they are both interrelated, and to a degree, each is a product of the other. Interest group activity is much greater in domestic policy than foreign policy; however, studies have concluded that interest groups do have an important influence on foreign policy.¹⁶ The relationship of interest groups to foreign

¹⁴ Doris A. Graber, Public Opinion, The President and Foreign Policy (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 324.

¹⁵ Wilcox, p. 115.

¹⁶ Henry W. Ehrmann (ed.), Interest Groups on Four Continents (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1958).

policy actors is dependent upon the issue and the nature of the interest group. Action by the group may be through other interest groups, direct to the legislature via public opinion, or based on influence with the Executive.

State and Local Governments

State and local governments become involved in foreign policy when the issue affects that level of government or a major constituency of that government. Power to influence the policy process is generally vested in control of party machinery, funds and ability to influence the electorate. In recent years as foreign and domestic policies have become more interrelated, state and local governments have become more involved in foreign policy.

Other Governments

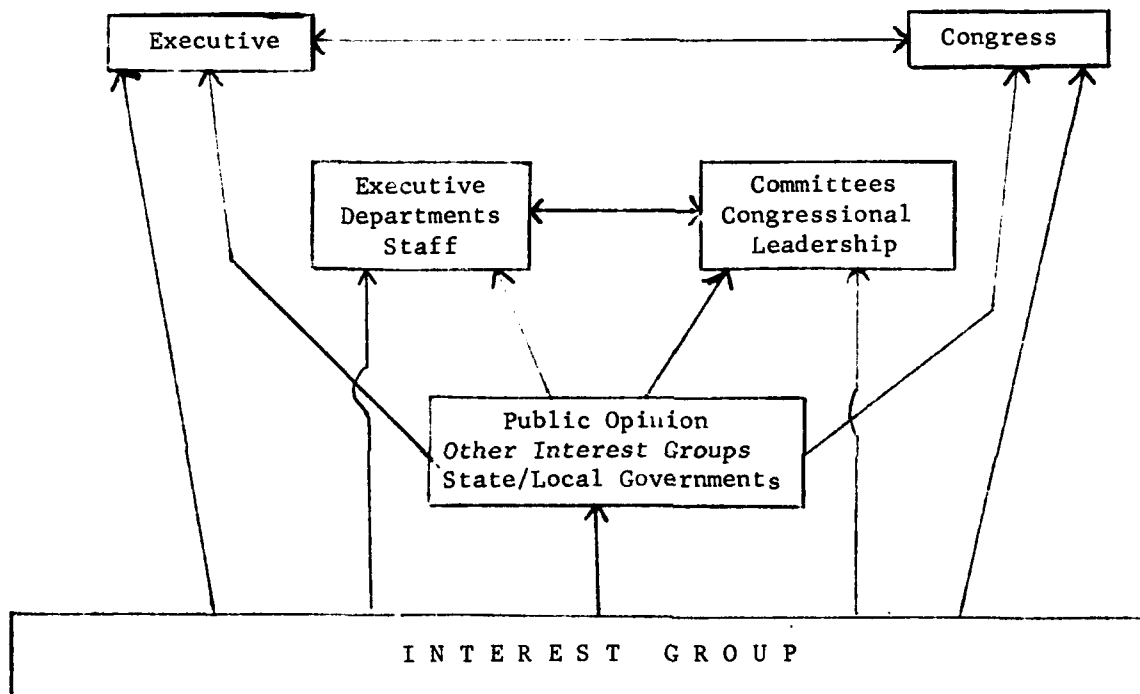
Actions in foreign affairs obviously affect the interest of more than one foreign power, and the anticipated reaction of other nations is always a consideration. In addition, the affinity of public opinion and interest groups to specific nations is a factor that policy makers must consider. In selected cases, foreign powers may employ lobbyists and support interest groups in an effort to achieve their own foreign policy goals.

INTEREST GROUP ACCESS TO POLICY MAKERS

The above discussion has examined the responsibilities within the federal government for foreign policy and identified key sources of power. It has also identified external forces which influence foreign policy and discusses the relationship of interest groups to

these other external forces. The model below portrays the direct and indirect points of access that an interest group may use to apply pressure on the policy maker.

Flow of Influence



SUMMARY

The process by which foreign policy is formulated and executed is very complex. The responsibility for foreign policy rests with the federal government and the President is the primary catalyst in the process. Congress, however, does have prerogatives and power in the process. External forces do exert influences. One external force is

the special interest group. Methods and means that an interest group employs to exert influence will depend on many factors and will change over time, but there are many points of access to the process that can be used by an interest group--singularly or collectively--to achieve the purpose of the group. Vital to the equation is influence with the President or his trusted advisors and the power elite in Congress.

Chapter 3

POTENTIAL OF PRO-ISRAEL INTEREST GROUPS TO INFLUENCE POLICY

Some criteria are necessary to facilitate evaluating the potential of interest groups to influence policy. A precise model which can be used to judge the potential of any interest group is not available, and the nature of the interest groups and their goals will affect the model. Francis Wilcox considers the political significance of interest groups to be dependent upon three factors: the people included in the interest group; the ability of the interest group to identify with a larger public; and campaign contributions.¹ These factors will be used as a general guide in evaluating the potential of Pro-Israel interest groups to influence U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

NATURE OF PRO-ISRAEL INTEREST GROUPS

In relation to U.S. foreign policy, Pro-Israel influence is exerted by many groups, but in the final analysis it is a coordinated effort. The American Jewish Yearbook lists 67 Zionist or pro-Israel organizations. Not included in these 67 organizations are many additional influential organizations such as the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Congress

¹Francis J. Wilcox, Congress, The Executive, and Foreign Policy (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 116-117.

and the World Jewish Congress, plus a multitude of cultural, religious and other organizations. In addition organizations exist which provide overview and coordinating functions within this extensive complex of organizations. An example is the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations which serves as a roof organization for 22 major groups dealing with American-Israeli problems.²

Although internal conflicts exist between the many Jewish groups, these conflicts do not appear to materially fragment opinion and effort in support for Israel. A significant aspect of the organizational structure is extensive overlapping membership. This phenomena tends to provide cohesiveness throughout the many organizations.³ The conflict between the pro-Zionist and non-Zionist within United States Jewry does not appear to dilute support for the Israeli cause. Dissenting opinions are voiced from within the Jewish community. The American Council for Judaism has been very anti-Zionist and frequently voiced opposition to the pro-Israel tone of U.S. policy.⁴ These opinions are in the minority, and the pro-Israel interest groups, Zionist, non-Zionist and mixed, are united for the most part in their support for Israel. American Zionists, estimated to number 750,000,⁵

²The American Jewish Committee, The American Jewish Yearbook, 1969 (New York: American Book, Stratford Press, Inc., 1969), pp. 490-494.

³Earl Dean Huff, "Zionist Influences upon U.S. Foreign Policy: A Study of American Policy Toward the Middle East from the Time of the Struggle for Israel to the Sinai Conflict" (unpublished dissertation, University of Idaho Graduate School, 1971), pp. 23-29.

⁴Elmer Berger, "Israel, Zionism, and the U.S. Government," a monograph published by the New York Chapter of the American Council for Judaism, (1970).

⁵Lawrence Moshei, "Zionist Role in U.S. Raises New Concern," National Observer, May 18, 1970.

have resolved their loyalty conflict. They, for the most part, are committed to the United States first; but they do provide open, vocal leadership in support of Israel. Non-Zionists while deploring the division of loyalty suggested by the Zionist concept remain sympathetic to the Israeli cause.⁶

Accordingly, the Jewish community in the United States is motivated to actively support a pro-Israel foreign policy. At the same time an organizational structure exists in this community to provide leadership and solidarity in this effort.

DEMOGRAPHY AND THE JEWISH VOTE

Precise data on the Jewish electorate is not available and general demographic data is no longer included in the National Census. The American Jewish Yearbook estimates the United States Jewish population at 5.86 million with 40 percent of this number living in the New York City area. The Jewish population is concentrated in the northeast, California and Florida. Ten states have Jewish populations in excess of two and one-half percent of total population, and these ten states represent 209 of the 270 electoral votes required to elect a president.⁷ These states also provide 20 of the 100 senators and 189 of the 435 representatives. In addition to the concentration of the Jewish population in several key states, the Jewish electorate is more inclined to exercise its right to vote than the population in general.

⁶Harry B. Ellis, The Dilemma of Israel (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1970), p. 14.

⁷The American Jewish Yearbook, p. 264.

The percentage of the Jewish vote to the total vote may be as much as 50 percent higher than the percentage of the Jewish population to the total population.⁸ Although the total Jewish population is very small, the concentration of the Jewish population and its degree of voter participation provides a potential to influence presidential elections and the composition of Congress.

Jewish Vote

The Jewish vote has been relatively predictable since the New Deal period. Generally, the Jewish vote has been 80 percent Democratic to 20 percent Republican.⁹ This Jewish commitment to the democratic, liberal cause has been constant and does not appear to respond dramatically to individuals or specific policies. The latest election substantiates this point. President Nixon had the apparent support of Israeli leadership. Serious concern was expressed by many leaders in the Jewish community on both the sincerity of Senator McGovern's policy toward Israel and the soundness of many of his domestic policies.¹⁰ In the 1972 election President Nixon did receive a greater percentage of the Jewish vote than he had received in 1968, from 17 to 37 percent. However, this crossover of the democratic, Jewish vote was not greater than the crossover of other caucasian democratic groups.¹¹ Although

⁸ Steven Isaacs, "Politics and the Jews," Washington Post, October 29, 1972, p. B-4.

⁹ Angus Campbell and others, The American Voter (University of Michigan Survey Research Center, 1960), p. 159.

¹⁰ Isaacs, pp. B-1 - B-5.

¹¹ "The Landslide: How and Why," Newsweek, November 13, 1972, pp. 30-31.

exceptions will occur, the Jewish vote is predictably liberal and democratic.

Significance of Jewish Vote

The Jewish vote is concentrated in several key states and a high percentage of the Jewish voters exercise their right to vote. However, the voting consistency of the Jewish electorate suggests that the Jewish vote is not responsive to specific issues unless the issue is survival of Israel as a nation. Selected house seats are responsive to the Jewish vote, but it is doubtful if the Jewish vote would be decisive in Senatorial elections except in New York. Accordingly the Jewish vote has only a limited capability to influence the composition of Congress. This influence is greater in the House than in the Senate, while the Senate is the more influential body in foreign policy. Because of New York State, the Jewish vote could be significant in a close presidential campaign. Nevertheless, the perceived importance of the Jewish vote by political candidates appears much greater than the real potential, and this perceived significance provides a real source of influence for pro-Israel interest groups.

THE JEWISH ELITE

Numbers alone do not reflect the only ability of the interest group population to exert influence. At least equally as important is the status of individuals affiliated with the group and their access to key personnel in government. In the areas of status and access, pro-Israel interest groups have impressive credentials.

Many statistics are available which reflect the position of the Jew amongst the intellectual, executive and power elites.

The proportion of the Jewish population which attends college exceeds the national average significantly. Nationally, Jewish student enrollment is 263 percent above statistical expectation. In the Ivy League schools this overrepresentation is 365 percent. In honor societies, Jewish students have more than three times the membership which normally would be expected. In education, the Directory of American Scholars indicates Jewish representation as 70 percent above the national average.¹² This trend continues in business with significant overrepresentation in all fields except heavy industry, finance, utilities and transportation.¹³ During the twentieth century, 27 percent of Nobel Laureates from the United States have been Jewish.¹⁴ Jewish leadership in U.S. labor organizations is twice that of other groups. Representation in Who's Who in America is 61 percent above the national average. Lastly, Jews tend to be more successful in terms of monetary reward.¹⁵

The power and influence of the Jewish elite provide access at the highest levels to all important actors in the foreign policy area. This access includes key committees of Congress, the White House and Executive Departments. In addition, access to other levels of government and other organizations extend the influence of the Jewish elite because of their ability to elicit support from these institutions. Historically, this has been an important and powerful tool of pro-Israel interest groups.¹⁶

¹²Nathaniel Weyl, The Jew in American Politics (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1968), pp. 185-186.

¹³Ibid., p. 178.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 185-186.

¹⁶Huff, pp. 37-47.

ABILITY OF PRO-ISRAEL INTEREST GROUPS TO
IDENTIFY WITH A LARGER PUBLIC

Many aspects of this means of influence are difficult to define. The Jewish elite provides access and influence throughout most institutions within the country. Periodicals supported by Jewish organizations abound. Although all are not pro-Israel publications, over 200 periodicals, published in 32 states and the District of Columbia, are supported by Jewish organizations.¹⁷ Monetary outlays to support pro-Israel public relations campaigns are difficult to identify but indications are that these outlays are considerable. The 1963 Senate Foreign Relations Committee investigation of the Jewish Agency uncovered an operation that had funnelled five million dollars into a pro-Israel campaign directed at public opinion.¹⁸ The ability of Jewish fund-raising activities, such as the United Jewish Appeal, to solicit funds for Israel and the sale of State of Israel bonds in the United States indicate the ability of pro-Israel interests to acquire funds.¹⁹ Zionist-affiliated publishers such as the Herzl Press publish numerous hard-bound books promoting the cause of Israel. Pro-Israel interests, as a group, have a very extensive program to influence public opinion and other interest groups.

Support does come from outside the Jewish community. Many religious organizations provide active support to a pro-Israel

¹⁷ American Jewish Yearbook, pp. 511-517.

¹⁸ Mosher, loc. cit.

¹⁹ Ellis, p. 54.

policy.²⁰ The Bible-belt philosophy of Palestine being the destined home of the Jews is prevalent throughout the south and mid west and provides support to the pro-Israel cause, and organized labor has generally supported a pro-Israel policy. Lastly, public opinion polls have shown public support for Israel.

Pro-Israel interest groups have a distinct ability to build on the existing sympathy for Israel which exists in the United States. Principal factors influencing this ability are the Jewish elite, extensive publications on the pro-Israel cause, money and support from labor and church groups.

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

At this point in time campaign contributions to political parties and individual politicians cannot be precisely identified. This aspect of influence by pro-Israel interest groups is of major importance, particularly contributions outside of states and districts which have heavy concentrations of Jewish voters. In the future, this aspect of interest group activity can be more scientifically analyzed because of the 1972 Campaign Contributions Disclosure Act.²¹

Certain inferences can be drawn from the ability of pro-Israel interest groups to collect money for support of Israel. Lawrence

²⁰ Henry A. Athinson and others, Security and the Middle East: The Problem and Its Solution (n.n., 1954). This is an example of an extremely anti-Arab publication submitted as a proposal to the President. Mr. Athinson in 1954 was secretary general of the Peace Church Union and 18 other individuals predominately associated with church groups were co-authors.

²¹ "Campaign 72, Tighter Campaign Spending Practices," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, Vol. XXX, No. 14 (April, 1972), p. 711.

Mosher has outlined in some detail the fund-raising capability of pro-Israel interests and the organizational mechanisms used to obtain money.²² Martin Hertzberg in discussing the effect of the Six Day War on American Jewry stated,

. . . between the day when Nasser closed the Gulf of Aqaba on May 23 and the end of the war on June 10--well over 100 million dollars, the bulk of it in cash, was realized for the Israel Emergency Fund of the United Jewish Appeal.²³

Ellis has estimated that over four billion has been provided by world Jewry for the support of Israel since 1948 with most of this coming from American Jews.²⁴ In respect to potential, this criteria is of major importance, but the question remains as to the amount of money employed and in support of which candidates.

SUMMARY

Pro-Israel interest groups have the organization, unity of effort and sufficient support from the Jewish population to actively promote a pro-Israel foreign policy for the Middle East. Public opinion is generally with the pro-Israel interests. Support of religious groups, particularly in the south and mid west, plus organized labor provide added public support. This established support plus an efficient and well-financed public relations program enable pro-Israel interest groups to obtain support from a large population. A major source of pro-Israel interest group strength results from the

²²Mosher, loc. cit.

²³Arthur Hertzberg, "Israel and American Jewry," Commentary, (August, 1967), pp. 69-73.

²⁴Ellis, p. 54.

Jewish elite which has access to all segments of government and all major institutions. The real significance of the Jewish vote may not be as great as viewed by many, but it could be decisive in selected cases, and many politicians are very concerned with the Jewish vote. Pro-Israel interest groups have political clout which can be employed to influence executive and legislative actions relating to foreign policy in the Middle East.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF PRO-ISRAEL INTEREST GROUP INFLUENCE ON MIDDLE EAST POLICY

An attempt will be made in this chapter to analyze pro-Israel interest group influence on foreign policy in the Middle East. Methods employed and the results achieved by pro-Israel interest groups will be examined in different political environments. Richard Stevens¹ and Earl Dean Huff's² philosophy doctoral dissertations will be used as the principal sources of data for pro-Israel interest group influence on U.S. policy during the period 1947 through 1956. Reports and articles from newspapers, periodicals, research reports and government publications will provide data for evaluating later events.

The principal aspect of the Middle East which elicits action by pro-Israel interest groups is the Arab-Israeli dispute. This problem preceded World War II and was an outgrowth of the early twentieth century Zionist goal of a Jewish State in Palestine. Immediately following Israel's Declaration of Statehood on May 14, 1948, war broke out between Israel and her Arab neighbors. Since that first conflict, real peace in the area has never been achieved and two major wars have

¹Richard P. Stevens, Ph.D., American Zionism and U.S. Foreign Policy, 1942-1947 (New York: Pageant Press, 1962).

²Earl Dean Huff, "Zionist Influences upon U.S. Foreign Policy: A Study of American Policy Toward the Middle East from the Time of the Struggle for Israel to the Sinai Conflict" (unpublished dissertation, University of Idaho, 1971).

occurred--the 1956 Sinai Campaign and the Six Day War of 1967. The principal points of friction that have existed between the two forces since 1948 are as follows: Israel's concern for survival; Arab concern for Israeli expansion; Arab refusal to recognize Israel; the status of Jerusalem; the Suez Canal; and the Palestine refugee problem.³

UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Following World War II the United States became the dominant Western influence in the Middle East. Although supporting statehood for Israel, the United States attempted to maintain friendly relations with all parties in the area. The inability of the Arabs and Israelis to resolve their differences has made it difficult for U.S. policy makers to articulate policies which were acceptable to both the Arabs and Israelis. As a result, United States relations with Arab countries have deteriorated and USSR influence in the area increased.⁴ The problem is as real now as it was in 1948 and the issues facing policy makers are equally as emotional now as then.

U.S. interests in the area have evolved over time. Following 1948, the United States was concerned with securing peace and stability in the area; maintaining friendly relations with both Arab countries and Israel; preventing USSR encroachment in the area; and maintaining access to Mid-East oil. Now, prevention of a major power confrontation is the most significant interest, and the energy crisis makes western access to oil even more important.⁵

³George Lenczowski (ed.), United States Interests in the Middle East (Washington: Americans Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1968), pp. 109-110.

⁴Ibid., pp. 34-35.

⁵Ibid., pp. 97-101.

PRO-ISRAEL INTEREST GROUP INFLUENCE ON
UNITED STATES POLICY

The potential of pro-Israel interest groups was discussed in the preceding chapter. Now the evolution and influence of these groups will be evaluated.

The roots of pro-Israel interest group activity in the United States precedes World War II. During the period between the two wars, a campaign was conducted by Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organization, to strengthen American Zionism. He supported inclusion of non-Zionist Jews in the Jewish agency as a means of obtaining support for the Zionist cause from the large population of non-Zionist Jews in the United States. By 1942 American Zionism was dedicated to full support of Zionist goals.⁶ Conflicts for power and leadership developed in the Jewish community, but Zionist and non-Zionist organizations cooperated to solidify support from the United States Jewish population for establishing a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine.⁷

Since that period, the majority of the Jewish population has supported actively a pro-Israel policy for the United States. Conflicts between Zionists and non-Zionists have and do exist. For the most part the conflicts evolve around the dual loyalty question and do not alter materially the support for a pro-Israel policy by the preponderance of the United States Jewish population.

⁶Stevens, pp. xviii-xxi.

⁷Ibid., pp. 1-10.

Pro-Israel Interest Groups and Statehood

At the conclusion of World War II, three major issues relating to the Palestine question existed. They were Jewish immigration into Palestine, partition, and establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. Each of these issues resulted in extensive pressure on United States policy makers. In the political setting, President Truman had just assumed the presidency. The mid-term elections were a consideration, and the presidential election in 1948 would give the Republican Party its first real chance for victory in 16 years. Because of the Jewish suffering at the hands of the Germans, United States and world opinion was very sympathetic to the Jews.

The British White Paper. Prior to President Roosevelt's death an extensive public relations campaign had been conducted by pro-Israel forces to obtain the support of public opinion, other interest groups, and Congress against the British White Paper. The proposal would have stopped immigration into Palestine in April, 1944. Proper use of the news media and saturation contacts by the Jewish elite were both employed effectively. Contact with officials included state and local government officials and nonofficial political leaders. It obtained antiwhite paper resolutions from all major Jewish organizations and many important non-Jewish organizations.⁸

Truman Rejects Morrison Grady Plan. This United States, British plan proposed a federal system of two autonomous states under British direction. Jewish immigration would be limited to 100,000,

⁸Stevens, pp. 33-34.

and immigration was conditional upon acceptance of the plan. The plan was not acceptable to Jewish interests. On October 4, 1946, Truman rejected the plan and supported the Jewish Agency partition plan. The power of the vote apparently had great influence on President Truman's decision. He wanted democratic support in Congress. The democratic candidates for governor and senator from New York had informed President Truman that rejection of the plan was essential to their reelection. Dewey was the potential 1948 Republican candidate for President and he was reported to be ready to come out against the plan. Political expediency caused President Truman to take this action against the advice of the State Department, over the objection of the British and without prodding from Congress.⁹

United Nations Plan for Partition. This plan provided for partition acceptable to the Jewish Agency, plus immigration. Direct pressure was brought to bear on the President to elicit United States assistance in getting the resolution passed in the United Nations. Behind the scenes pressure was applied also on the administration via potential loss of campaign contributions.¹⁰

Statehood. Following the United Nations vote for partition, civil war broke out and continued until the British withdrew from Palestine on May 14, 1948. At that time, Israel proclaimed Statehood and President Truman recognized the de facto authority of the State of

⁹Ibid., pp. 150-160.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 165-185.

Israel immediately. Truman's decision was taken with the advice of the White House Staff and over the objection of the State Department. The final decision was influenced by direct contacts from influential members of the Jewish community and President Truman's apparent concern for the Jewish vote.¹¹

Pro-Israel Interest Group Influence. This brief analysis points out several key factors. At that point in time, pro-Israel forces were efficiently organized. They could conduct an effective public relations campaign. The Chief Executive and political figures in New York State were concerned about the Jewish vote. Lastly, leaders in the pro-Israel cause had access to the White House Staff and the President. The pro-Israel forces achieved their goals.

Eisenhower and the Sinai Conflict

The Sinai conflict was an outgrowth of both continued Arab-Israeli friction and Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal. This conflict resulted in a coordinated Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt. President Eisenhower immediately labeled the attack an act of aggression and brought pressure to bear on Israel, England and France to withdraw. England and France did withdraw.¹² The events surrounding Israeli withdrawal will be discussed later.

President Eisenhower was in the midst of a national election. The Republicans had majorities in the House and Senate during his first

¹¹Ibid., pp. 203-206.

¹²Theodore Draper, "Israel and World Politics," Commentary, (August, 1967), p. 23.

two years in office, but the Democrats had obtained control of both houses during the mid-term elections.¹³ The Secretary of State was John Foster Dulles, a very strong individual who had the complete confidence of the President. The primary goal of United States foreign policy during this Administration was containment of communist expansion. In the Middle East specific goals centered around establishing a regional alliance oriented against communist expansion and maintaining an even-handed approach with both Arab countries and Israel.¹⁴

Interest Group Influence Prior to the Conflict. Although pro-Israel interest group activity in the United States had abated following 1948, three issues arose during the 1953-1956 period which triggered renewed pro-Israel interest group activity. These issues were the Jordan River diversion, the Aswan Dam, and Soviet military aid to Egypt. The Jordan River issue arose when the United Nations directed Israel to cease working in the demilitarized zone. When Israel failed to comply, Dulles announced the deferment of all aid to Israel. This action was accomplished by Executive decision and without congressional action. Pro-Israel interest group response was sufficient to make the interest group activity a topic of discussion in the Cabinet.¹⁵

USSR arms to Egypt and the Aswan Dam are interrelated. The initial agreement between Egypt and the communists on arms supply

¹³Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1972, pp. 366-367.

¹⁴Huff, pp. 156-158.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 165-168.

occurred in 1955.¹⁶ During the same period, the United States had offered aid to Egypt to build the dam. Pro-Israel interest groups had unleashed a campaign to provide arms for Israel that was unsuccessful, but these interest groups were successful in generating congressional opposition to the Aswan Dam project. Pro-Israel interest groups had obtained public support for Israel and against Egypt but they had been unable to influence the President. He had resisted the threat of the Jewish vote to his upcoming election on the basis that the Jewish community had not provided appreciable support during the 1952 election.¹⁷ Pro-Israel groups were more successful with Congress. The interest groups could not reverse the arms policy for Israel, but these interest groups in coalition with southern cotton interests developed sufficient strength in Congress to prevent financing the Aswan Dam project.¹⁸ This method of using Congress as the power element to influence policy in support of Israel continued throughout this Republican administration.

The Suez Crisis of 1956. The deterioration of the Suez situation in 1956 progressed concurrently with the election campaign of that year. Eisenhower and Dulles continued to apply pressure on England, France and Israel to maintain restraint in their actions against Israel. Pro-Israel interests conducted a massive public relations campaign and achieved the complete support of the Democratic Party, most congressmen, and many state-elected officials. President Eisenhower was under extreme pressure from within the Republican

¹⁶Draper, p. 22.

¹⁷Huff, p. 179.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 205-209.

Party to modify his Middle East policy. He resisted these demands, and although the Jewish vote went against him as it did in 1952, his overall popularity was not affected.¹⁹

Following the initiation of hostilities on October 29, 1956 and the election, the Administration began applying pressure on Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab territories. When Israel resisted, President Eisenhower appeared prepared to invoke sanctions against Israel. At this point his policy failed. It failed because pro-Israel influence in Congress was sufficient to insure that Congress would not condone sanctions. The end result was that the Administration, to obtain Israeli withdrawal, had to accede to a United States guarantee of unrestricted access of Israel in the Gulf of Aqaba. Although the pro-Israel interests were unable to obtain complete accord with their cause, they ultimately forced the Administration to take the first step toward a bilateral security agreement with Israel,²⁰ a long-time goal of the pro-Israel interest groups.

Assessment. During the Eisenhower Administration and the Suez Crisis of 1956, pro-Israel interests were unable to apply direct pressure on the Executive. Neither their elite access, electoral power, or campaign contributions materially affected executive actions. Pro-Israel influence in Congress was decisive. As such, Administration policy in the case of Aswan and sanctions were thwarted and a United States guarantee to Israel obtained.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 227-232.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 250-257.

The Six Day War and Its Aftermath

On June 5, 1967, Israel initiated a preemptive attack on Arab forces and in six days decisively defeated the Arab armies. In the process Israel occupied all of Jerusalem, the west bank of the Jordan River, Sinai and the Golan Heights area in Syria. The immediate causes of this conflict were the closing of the Straits of Tiran by Nasser and armed encirclement of Israel by the Arab nations. However, the real issue was the survival of Israel. President Johnson prior to the actual outbreak of war had denounced Nasser's closing of the Straits of Tiran and stated that the United States considered the Gulf of Aqaba to be an international waterway.²¹

Initial Reaction. Immediately following the Six Day War, the tenor of United States policy was sympathetic to Israel while striving to obtain peace in the area.²² Congressional response was immediate and supported Israel. Resolutions supporting Israel were introduced in both houses, and the House resolution called on the President to oppose withdrawal of Israeli forces as a precondition to peace talks.²³ Public opinion also supported the Israeli cause.²⁴ This sympathetic attitude toward Israel was aided by Nasser's vocal denunciation of alleged U.S. military support for Israel during the war.

²¹Draper, pp. 35-36.

²²Lenczowski, pp. 119-121. Excerpts from President Johnson's address to Department of State Foreign Policy Conference for Educators on June 19, 1967.

²³Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, Vol. XXV, No. 27 (July 7, 1967), p. 1173.

²⁴"The Harris Survey," Washington Post, September 9, 1967.

Pro-Israel interests reacted strongly against Arab actions. However, except for criticism for President Johnson's failure to act more decisively against Egypt's closure of the Straits of Tiran, no immediate issue was present. Although pro-Zionist in nature, Rabbi Hertzberg's article, "Israel and American Jewry," portrays vividly the solidarity of the Jewish community toward the Israeli problem.²⁵

Issues in which U.S. policy failed to correspond to either Israel's policy or desires, and thus brought about interest group activity and foreign policy conflicts, occurred later.

After 1968. In the 1968 political election, President Nixon won the presidency, but the Republican Party failed to win a majority in either the House or Senate. Both party platforms insured United States support for Israel, but the Democratic platform was stronger in tone than the Republican platform.²⁶

The United States in effect had adopted a policy which insured Israel the support necessary to survive as a state. Issues with which President Nixon became concerned and in which his policy was not completely acceptable to Israel evolved around our supply of arms to Israel, the method of negotiating a peace settlement, and the meaning of United Nations Resolution 242, November, 1967, in respect to withdrawal of forces.²⁷ On each of these issues, pro-Israel interest

²⁵ Arthur Hertzberg, "Israel and American Jewry," Commentary, (August, 1967), pp. 68-73.

²⁶ Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, Vol. XXVI, No. 32 (August 9, 1967), p. 2133; and Vol. XXVI, No. 35 (August 30, 1968), pp. 2299-2300.

²⁷ Lenczowski, pp. 121-122. "United Nations Security Council Resolution 242," November 22, 1967.

groups lobbied for United States action which supported the policies or requests of Israel. In each case, Congressional pressure also was brought to bear on the President to modify his policy.

A case in point is that of arms sales. Administration policy was to maintain a balance of power in the Middle East and the Administration had attempted to cause the USSR to stop providing arms to Arab nations. Premier Golda Meir on September 25, 1969, requested an additional 100 airplanes, arms sales and 200 million in economic aid.²⁸ The United States had previously provided 50 phantom jets to Israel. The Administration procrastinated on the request in an attempt to slow down the arms flow to the area. Compounding the problem was the French agreement to sell Mirage jets to Libya. In January, 1970, Senate and House resolutions proposed additional support for Israel and implied that Israel was being left defenseless. The American Jewish Committee labeled 1969 the year of U.S. abandonment. In addition, many members of Congress were very critical of the French sale of aircraft to Libya.²⁹ On February 24, over 3,500 persons protested against the French actions. Also, over 50 percent of the House membership boycotted President Pompedou's presentation to Congress.³⁰ In June, 1970, a meeting was requested with the Secretary of State by 73 Senators on the issue of arms sales to Israel. In October, 1970, the Congress authorized unlimited transfer of aircraft and related

²⁸Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, Vol. XXXVII, No. 40 (October 3, 1969), p. 1837.

²⁹Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, Vol. XXVIII, No. 5 (January 30, 1970), pp. 290-300.

³⁰Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, Vol. XXVIII, No. 9 (February 27, 1970), p. 606.

equipment to Israel, and in November, the President requested that Congress approve \$500 million in military purchase credits for Israel.³¹

A second case concerns negotiations. During late 1968 and 1969, the Administration was searching for a Four Power solution to the Mid-East problem. Israel was opposed to a Four Power solution and agreeable only to direct negotiations. On April 23, 1969, an advertisement placed in the New York Times by the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee opposed four power negotiations. This advertisement was signed by 63 senators and 238 representatives.³² Congressional pressure on this issue continued and on January 25, 1970, President Nixon supported direct negotiations between Israel and the Arabs.³³

SUMMARY

Since World War II, pro-Israel interest groups have applied pressure to United States policy makers. In the Truman Administration, direct pressure on the President via the vote, the Jewish elite and influential congressmen and elected officials was sufficient to achieve interest group goals. In the Eisenhower Administration, access to the President was limited, his concern for the Jewish vote minimal, and he did not respond to the general pro-Israel feeling in the Democratic Congress. Nevertheless, pro-Israel interests were able

³¹Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1970 (Washington: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1971), pp. 381, 999, and 1015.

³²Harry B. Ellis, The Dilemma of Israel (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1970), p. 51.

³³Congressional Quarterly, January 30, 1970, loc. cit.

to partially achieve their goals. Their influence was manifested in their power in Congress. In the late 1960s with another Republican President and Democratic Congress, pro-Israel interest groups were generally able to achieve their goals. Again, a major source of power in the foreign policy process came from pro-Israel interest group influence in Congress.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

The foreign policy process in the United States is complex and many factors contribute to the process. The President is the chief spokesman and executor of foreign policy, but Congress has selected defined powers. External forces interact with the President and Congress and do influence policy. Interest groups are one of the external forces which may influence foreign policy. The ability of interest groups to influence policy is dependent upon electoral power, access to executive and legislative power figures in the foreign policy process, and funds to conduct public relations programs and influence elections. When interest group proposals are in keeping with U.S. national interests and reflect the majority interest, they constitute a positive influence on the foreign policy process. Powerful interest groups which propose policies that are not in keeping with national interests and reflect only the goals of a select group can be detrimental to this process.

Pro-Israel groups have the organization, leadership, and monetary support to be a powerful interest group, and they have demonstrated their ability to influence U.S. policy in the Middle East. The organizational base of these groups is the Jewish population. The strength of this base is built around the concentration of the Jewish community, its willingness to support financially pro-Israel programs,

and the Jewish elite. Over time, these interest groups have maintained public opinion in their favor and have been able to obtain active support from other interest groups.

The political power base of pro-Israel interests is the Democratic Party. In addition, Congressional action has reacted, historically, in support of pro-Israel interests. Since World War II, the objectives of pro-Israel interest groups normally have been aligned with broad United States policy toward the Middle East. When conflicts or specific issues have developed between administrative policy and pro-Israel interests, policy for the most part has been modified. At times, pro-Israel interest groups were unable to influence the Executive directly, but indirect influences through Congress normally counterbalanced the Executive position.


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